

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 11, and 21 of the application to improve readability of the claims. Claims 1-30 are pending in the application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14-22, and 25-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Asakawa (U.S. Pat. No. 6, 135,809 B1), and rejected claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 23, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Asakawa in view of Horie (U.S. Pat. No. 6,231,360 B1).

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1, 2, 7, 8, 11, 12, 14-22, and 25-30 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

In Applicants' Amendment After Final dated May 4, 2004, Applicants pointed out that card connector 1 of Asakawa is not "configured to hold a first card," as recited in claims 1 and 11. Claims 1 and 11 both recite a card connector "configured to hold a first card having an upper body portion, a lower body portion formed narrower than the upper body portion...and stepped portions *formed along both side edges of the card* by a bottom surface of said upper body portion and a bottom surface of said lower body portion." In the most recent Office Action, however, the Examiner argues that the space shown in Fig. 2 of Asakawa can accommodate a card with a larger thickness, "thus meeting the claim limitations." (Office Action, page 4-5.)

The structure described by Asakawa, however, cannot hold a first card of the type required by claims 1 and 11. As illustrated in Fig. 2 of Asakawa, partition 28

divides the space between the “side walls.” Partition 28 would, therefore, interfere with, and thus would not be “configured to hold,” a card having “stepped portions formed along both side edges of the card by a bottom surface of said upper body portion and a bottom surface of said lower body portion” as recited in claims 1 and 11.

Claim 21 also requires a card connector including structure “to hold a first card having...a lower body portion formed narrower than the upper body portion... and stepped portions *formed along both side edges of the card* by a bottom surface of said upper body portion and a bottom surface of said lower body portion.” (Emphasis added.) At least for the reasons explained in conjunction with claims 1 and 11, therefore, Asakawa also fails to teach all elements of claim 21.

Moreover, Claim 21 requires a first space “unobstructed across the width of said lower body portion of the entire length of said first space,” an element that Asakawa does not teach or suggest (again due to the presence of partition 28). The Office Action did not address this recited feature of Claim 21, which Applicants added in the Amendment After Final submitted, along with a Request for Continued Examination, on May 4, 2004.

Claims 2, 7, 8, 12, 14-20, 22, and 25-30 depend from claim 1, claim 11, or claim 21, and are allowable at least due to their dependence from one of the independent claims.

Further, although contacts 20, 50 of Asakawa can serve as braking pieces, the contacts cannot serve as the braking pieces recited in the claims, at least because contacts 20, 50 are not “arranged at such a position that the elastic braking piece engages the bottom surface of the upper body portion of said first card when said first

card is inserted and engages the bottom surface of the card body portion of said second card when said second card is inserted," as recited in claims 7, 11, 23, and 27.

Additionally, Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 13, 23, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), as being unpatentable over Asakawa in view of Horie.

Horie fails to teach a card connector "configured to hold a first card having an upper body portion, a lower body portion formed narrower than the upper body portion...and stepped portions *formed along both side edges of the card* by a bottom surface of said upper body portion and a bottom surface of said lower body portion," and is not relied upon by the Examiner for such teachings. Because the references on which the Examiner relies fail to teach or suggest all elements of the claims, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3, 4, 9, and 10 are allowable at least due to their dependence from claim 1, claim 13 is allowable at least due to its dependence from claim 11, and claims 23 and 24 are allowable at least due to their dependence from claim 21.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: October 6, 2004

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